SASKATCHEWAN

Premier's
Disabled
Persons
Advisory
Committee

BIUTIES 91

A Report of the
PREMIER'S DISABLED PERSONS ADVISORY COMMITTEE
of Saskatchewan

The following members of the Premier's Disabled Persons Advisory Committee are pleased to present this report to the Government of Saskatchewan.

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Premier's
Disabled Persons
Advisory
Committee

1870 Albert Street
Regina, Canada
S4P 3V7

August 20, 1991

Premier Grant Devine
Room 226
Legislative Building
Regina, Saskatchewan
S4S 0B3

Dear Premier Devine:

The Premier's Disabled Persons Advisory Committee is pleased to submit its report on the preliminary strategies required to further the quality of life for Saskatchewan citizens with disabilities.

The forty-nine recommendations contained in this document are a result of our consultations with eighteen advocacy groups and service providers who represent persons with disabilities in our province.

We eagerly await government's response to this report. Meanwhile, our mandate to examine issues of relevance to the disabled community will continue.

We wish to thank you for this opportunity to contribute to a brighter future for persons with disabilities in Saskatchewan.

Respectfully,

Cindy Smith

Cindy Smith, Chairperson

PREMIER OF SASKATCHEWAN

LEGISLATIVE BUILDING
REGINA, CANADA S4S 0B3 (306) 787-6271

August 20, 1991

Mrs. Cindy Smith, Chairman
Premier's Disabled Persons
Advisory Committee
Disabilities Directorate
Human Resources, Labour and Employment
Regina, Saskatchewan
S4P 3V7

Dear Mrs. Smith:

Thank you for submitting the report from the Premier's Disabled Persons Advisory Committee. In receiving *"ABILITIES '91"*, I commend the efforts of the Committee to involve disabled people in determining the future direction and outcome of their services.

The Committee has consulted many special interest groups that represent or serve persons with disabilities in Saskatchewan. You have identified key issues and common needs, and you have considered the effectiveness of existing services in meeting their needs. The Committee recognizes the importance of efficiency and accountability in the provision of services, and you have proposed recommendations to improve the quality of life for persons with disabilities, and their families.

The Committee has demonstrated diligence and conviction in preparing this report. Your efforts are greatly appreciated.

Yours sincerely,

Grant Devine
Premier

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OUR VISION:

Although Western societies continue to make progress in addressing the rights and needs of citizens with disabilities, their full social and economic integration has yet to be realized.

Visions, by definition, are forward-looking and idyllic. The following is our view of how Saskatchewan society **should** look for all persons by the turn of the century.

Although this vision may seem somewhat idealistic, with determination and commitment on the part of everyone, these changes will be achieved.

- - -

In Saskatchewan, persons with disabilities participate in all aspects of society.

We respect and honour the uniqueness of all persons. Though culturally diverse, Saskatchewan people enjoy a profound feeling of community, regardless of race, ethnicity, age, gender, or physical or mental abilities.

Though families will always be the lifeblood of Saskatchewan, we revere individuality, realizing that despite our differing abilities, every person is an essential thread in the social fabric.

Citizens of Saskatchewan acknowledge that personal empowerment is a cornerstone of self-esteem and self-sufficiency; that we all share the same basic needs and desires, and that these goals are attainable. Individuals who require assistance to achieve full social and economic parity are blessed with caring families, friends and countless volunteers. Our efforts are supported by world-class programs in health, social services, education, employment, housing, recreation and transportation.

Leadership comes through public awareness and community participation. In Saskatchewan, our spirit of teamwork, coupled with our talent for innovation, inspires us to champion future causes and meet new challenges.

We set high standards for ourselves in Saskatchewan. So we should; we deserve the best.

Family Living

Saskatchewan people continue to demonstrate care and compassion for persons with disabilities and their families. A variety of support networks enable families to remain strong and self-reliant.

Prevention

Saskatchewan citizens enjoy prosperous and socially responsible lifestyles. We learn about healthy living, accident prevention, and safety from many sources, including schools, the workplace, and the home. Consequently, our people benefit from longer, more productive lives.

Health Services

Our province is noted for providing innovative, local health services. Responsible use of these services by Saskatchewan people ensures that quality health care is available when needed.

Education

Our province is a world leader in meeting the need for integrated and individualized learning environments. To maximize quality of life, education programs encourage Saskatchewan students to accept and adapt to changing environments. The outcome of education is independent, confident people.

Employment

All Saskatchewan people have access to meaningful employment opportunities. Our employers embrace the concept of employment equity, and provide job accommodation for persons with various abilities.

Recreation

Recreation opportunities are available for all Saskatchewan citizens. Community programs and facilities are suited to a wide variety of interests, abilities and skills. Leisure activities contribute to our sense of well-being and fulfilment.

Transportation

Saskatchewan people enjoy a range of transportation services that allow us the freedom to participate in all aspects of society. Various cost-effective transportation options facilitate independence for everyone.

Housing

The Saskatchewan way of life centres around the home, and is enhanced by comfortable accommodation. Persons with disabilities determine their housing needs and are directly involved in design and construction.

Public Services

In Saskatchewan, persons with disabilities are active in formulating public policies and controlling service delivery. Responsibility and accountability are central to this coordinated approach. Services and information are readily available to the consumer.

PEOPLE ARE THE STRENGTH OF SASKATCHEWAN. WE SHAPE OUR INDIVIDUAL AND COLLECTIVE DESTINY.

INTRODUCTION:

> With focused efforts on specific targets, the Premier's Advisory Committee can be a catalyst to...change the "system" and our society. Only in this way can Saskatchewan provide a better quality of life to all residents, regardless of disability.
>
> - Multiple Sclerosis Society of Canada, Saskatchewan Division, January, 1991

In presenting this report, the Premier's Disabled Persons Advisory Committee strives to improve the quality of life for persons with disabilities in Saskatchewan.

We have been guided in our work by the following principles:

- We believe that government(s) should play a supportive role in assisting persons with disabilities to achieve independence;
- We believe that every effort should be made to "help people help themselves", by facilitating their ability to meet their individual needs;
- We believe in self-help, and consumers as decision-makers;
- We believe that nongovernmental services should be community-based and consumer-controlled;
- We believe that increased emphasis must be placed on providing information regarding the variety of government services which exist to assist disabled persons.
- We believe in the ongoing need to enhance public and employer awareness about the abilities of persons who have disabilities;
- We believe that every effort to maximize service coordination, interagency cooperation and collaboration will result in greater program effectiveness and efficiency.

We acknowledge that a wide range of services currently exist, and we commend the diligence and perseverance of those who provide services. Nevertheless, we recognize that certain gaps in service continue to hamper the independence and self-sufficiency of persons with disabilities. We encourage government departments, nongovernment organizations and special interest groups to continue to strive for excellence in providing services for persons with disabilities, by working to address these inequities.

DEFINITION OF DISABILITY:

While several definitions related to disability are cited in social science literature, for the purposes of this report, the Advisory Committee has adopted that of (a) the World Health Organization, and (b) that of The Saskatchewan Human Rights Code. Respectively, they read:

A) WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION:

Handicap: "A disadvantage for a given individual resulting from an impairment or disability that limits or prevents the fulfillment of a role that is normal (depending on age, sex, social and cultural factors) for that individual".

Disability: "Any restriction or lack of ability to perform an activity in the manner or within the range considered normal."

Impairment: "Any loss or abnormality of psychological, physiological, or anatomical structure or function".

B) SASKATCHEWAN HUMAN RIGHTS CODE, clause 2 (d.1):

"In this Act:

(d.1) 'disability' means:

(i) any degree of physical disability, infirmity, malformation or disfigurement that is caused by bodily injury, birth defect or illness and, without limiting the generality of the foregoing, includes:

(A) epilepsy;
(B) any degree of paralysis;
(C) amputation;
(D) lack of physical co-ordination;
(E) blindness or visual impediment;
(F) deafness or hearing impediment;
(G) muteness or speech impediment; or
(H) physical reliance on a guide dog, wheelchair or other remedial appliance or device; or

(ii) any of:

(A) a condition of mental retardation or impairment;
(B) a learning disability or a dysfunction in one or more of the processes involved in the comprehension or use of symbols or spoken language; or
(C) a mental disorder".

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

The past decade has brought with it increasing awareness of both disabling conditions and the disparate challenges confronting persons with disabilities. Yet, despite this increased understanding, many of us are surprised to learn that, according to World Health Organization criteria, 13.2% of Saskatchewan's population have some form of disability or impairment. In addition to posing mobility challenges for many, these conditions may relate to one's ability to see, hear, speak, or perform other functions society considers "normal". Indeed, some individuals experience more than one impairment.

In spite of our demographic, geographic, cultural and economic diversity, there is considerable overlap in the issues impacting Canadians with disabilities. Frequently they involve transportation, education, employment, the availability of assistive devices, and so on. Nevertheless, just as the types and levels of service provision vary widely between provinces, so do the needs. This pluralism does much to answer the question: "Why, after so many studies and task forces, has another committee been convened to examine disability issues?"

Few would argue that Saskatchewan citizens possess their own cultural identity. Fewer yet would disagree that we share a common desire: to be healthy, educated, productive and self-sufficient. In short, to have our most fundamental needs met.

Canadians generally, and Saskatchewan residents specifically, have in many ways been blessed: we enjoy one of the highest standards of living in the world; we are globally regarded as leaders in health, social programs and education; we are law-abiding. But while we rightfully hold the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms sacred, the goals of social parity and equal opportunity remain distant for many.

It has been ten years since the federal government published Obstacles: Report of the Special Committee on the Disabled and the Handicapped. Since that time, the public has begun to realize that it is erroneous to equate "disability" with "inability". Further, through the guidance and insistence of numerous advocacy groups, considerable strides have been made towards assuring that Canadians each share the same birthright.

However, as the close of the International Decade of the Disabled grows nearer, we recognize that much needs to be done to achieve this noble ideal.

It was through this recognition, and the growing public awareness arising from Rick Hansen's MAN IN MOTION WORLD TOUR, that the Premier's Disabled Persons Advisory Committee of Saskatchewan was established in 1989. In brief, the Committee is dedicated to ensuring that provincial programs and policies reflect the needs and capabilities of Saskatchewan citizens with disabilities.

Our Advisory Committee is comprised of a chairperson and twelve members from across the province who either have a disability, or who are closely associated with disabled persons and those organizations which serve them. While we are directly responsible to the Premier, we initially report to the Minister of Human Resources, Labour and Employment. The Disabilities Directorate, a branch of that department, provides administrative and research support to our group.

The fundamental role of our Committee is to:

(a) receive briefs and suggestions concerning the status of persons with disabilities;
(b) recommend research and analysis to be undertaken by the provincial government relevant to the needs of persons with disabilities;
(c) appoint as necessary, subcommittees comprised of Committee members and/or other consultants to deal with specific issues or projects; and
(d) recommend new initiatives, programs and policies to enhance the quality of life of persons with disabilities.

In seeking to achieve our objectives, we have relied heavily on the immense benefit of strong community involvement. We have met personally with eighteen organizations which represent Saskatchewan's cross-disability population. (For a list of these groups, see page 13.)

We salute these groups, for by sharing their concerns they have assisted us in fulfilling our central objective: to recommend and promote additional initiatives to improve the lives of all citizens with disabilities.

Through its meetings with the aforementioned organizations, the Advisory Committee has identified numerous issues affecting persons with disabilities, which require remedial action. To address these concerns, forty-nine recommendations have been developed (see page 27). These recommendations are subsumed under the following headings:

- Access to Program Information
- Service Coordination
- Education and Public Awareness
- Employment and Employer Awareness
- Special Needs Transportation
- Income and Vocational Services
- Special Needs Housing
- Attendant Care
- Special Needs Recreation
- Prevention of Disabilities
- Family Living
- Abuse of Persons with Disabilities
- Social Programs Auditor
- Physical Access
- Communication Devices
- Research and Development

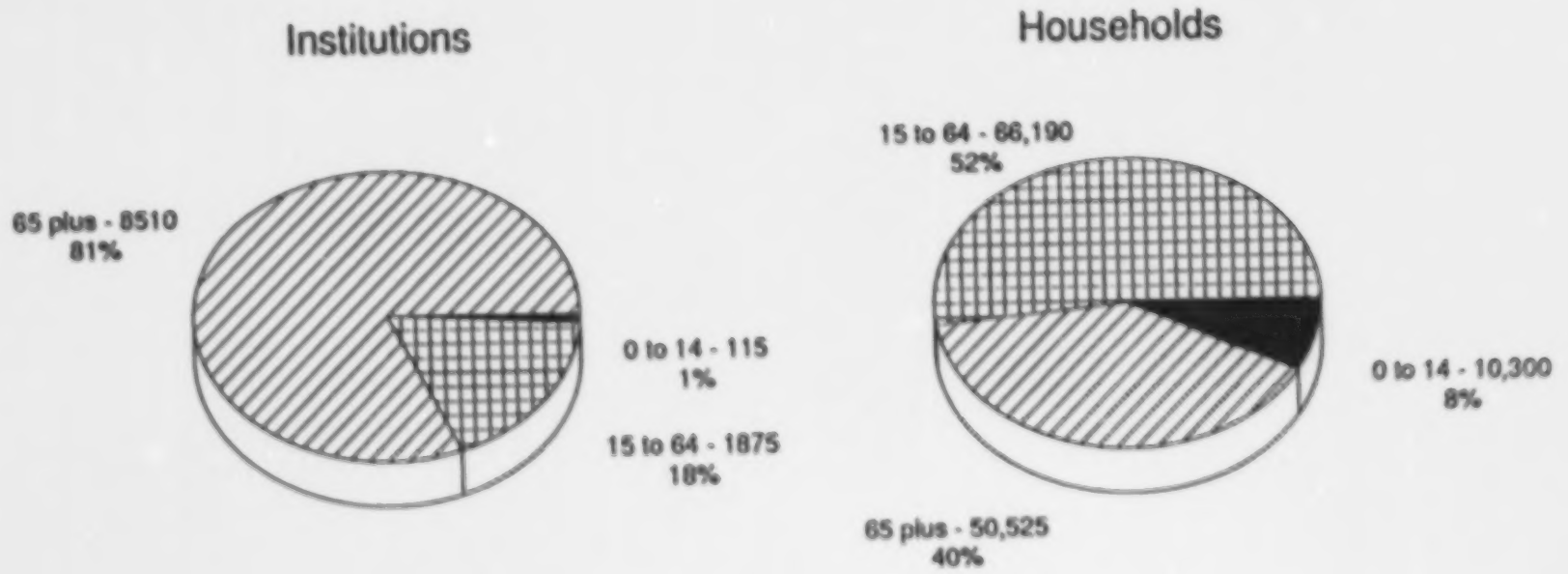
STATISTICAL PROFILE:

According to data generated by Health and Welfare Canada's HEALTH AND ACTIVITY LIMITATION SURVEY conducted in 1986, 137,520 Saskatchewan residents (13.9%) have some form of impairment or disability. Of these, females comprise 70,265; males 67,255.

The following graphs and charts offer a basic statistical profile of citizens with disabilities in Saskatchewan.

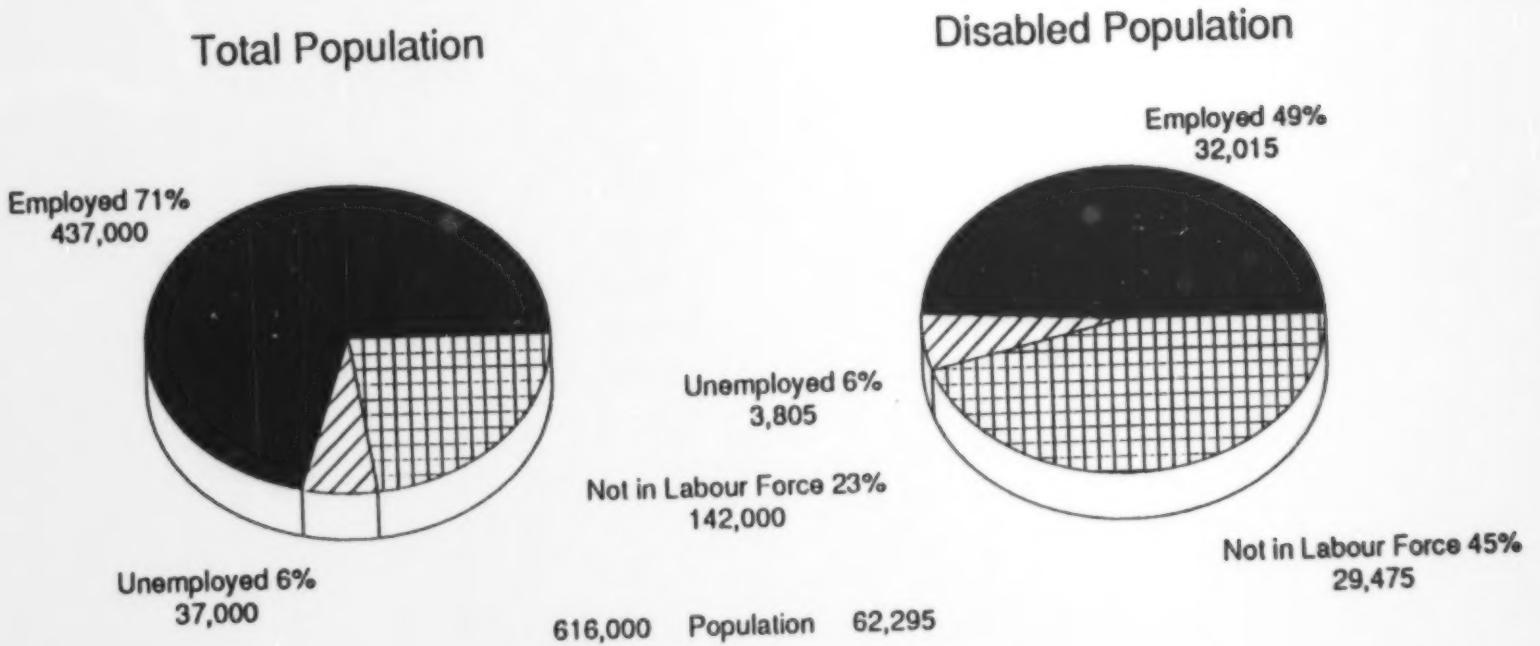
All information depicted is based on data excerpted from:
Statistics Canada: Health and Activity Limitation Survey: Subprovincial Data for Saskatchewan. Ottawa: Minister of Regional Industrial Expansion and the Minister of State for Science and Technology. March, 1989. Catalog No. 82-610.

1986 Disabled Population
By Place of Residence and Age Group



Source: Statistics Canada

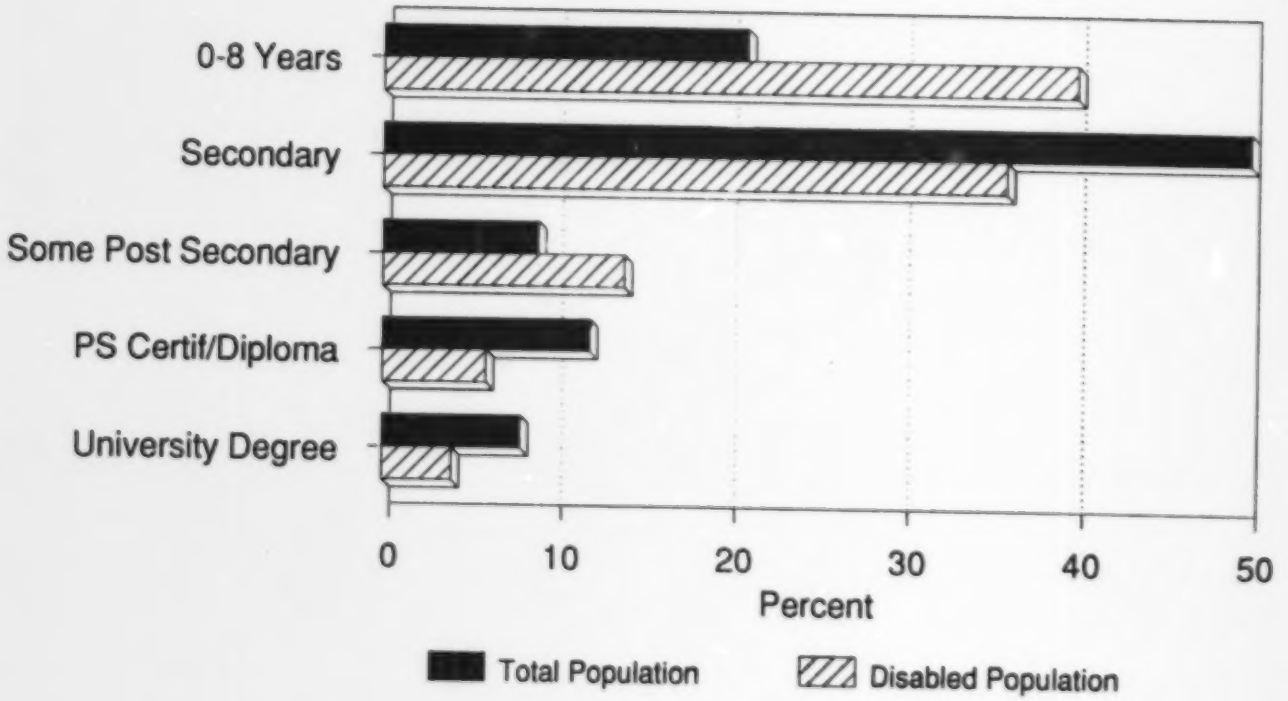
Selected Labour Force Characteristics Total and Disabled Population, 1986 Age Group 15 to 64



616,000	Population	62,295
76.9%	Participation Rate	54.9%
7.8%	Unemployment Rate	10.6%
70.9%	Employment Population Ratio	49.0%

Source: Statistics Canada

Highest Level of Schooling
Total and Disabled Population, 1986
15 Years of Age and Over



Source: Statistics Canada

EXPRESSED NEEDS:

Persons with disabilities are best suited to identifying their unique needs, and participating in the development of efficient and effective support services. This fundamental tenet was instrumental in prompting the Advisory Committee to consult with the various agencies and advocacy groups listed below, to determine their individual and (often) collective concerns, and the most effective means of addressing them.

While the Advisory Committee will solicit input from other groups in future, to date, eighteen organizations have lent their expertise to the consultation process. They are:

- Canadian Mental Health Association;
- Canadian National Institute for the Blind;
- Canadian Paraplegic Association;
- Disabled Natives Organization;
- DisAbled Women's Network;
- Early Childhood Intervention Program;
- Employment Access;
- Handicapped Farmers' Program;
- Multiple Sclerosis Society, Saskatchewan Division.
- National Access Awareness Week Steering Committee;
- Saskatchewan Abilities Council;
- Saskatchewan Association for Community Living;
- Saskatchewan Association of Rehabilitation Centres;
- Saskatchewan Federation of the Council for Exceptional Children;
- Saskatchewan Head Injury Association;
- Saskatchewan Voice of the Handicapped;
- Services for Hearing Impaired Persons; and,
- South Saskatchewan Independent Living Resource Centre.

We warmly commend each group for its contribution to our ongoing community dialogue. Their input has been invaluable in assisting us to address those needs arising from a broad range of disabilities.

The following is a summary of the organizational goals and concerns expressed by the above presenters.

A. Canadian Mental Health Association

The goal of the Canadian Mental Health Association is to advocate for improved services to assist the mentally ill and their families.

Expressed Needs

- A new philosophy of care in providing services for the mentally ill and their families;
- Expanding outreach services to rural Saskatchewan;
- Assigning case managers to follow through on progress from the period of hospitalization to stabilization;
- Ensuring adequate support services such as housing are available;
- Providing a disability pension which is not tied to welfare;
- Increasing the comfort and clothing allowance provided by Social Services;
- Shifting away from dependence on welfare and social services;
- Expanding opportunities for job training and vocational planning to enhance self-sufficiency;
- Developing consistent standards of care for the mentally ill to facilitate treatment and recovery;
- Ensuring one-stop shopping for services.

Options Proposed to Address Needs

- Establish a new Mental Health Commission and Mental Health Act (as noted in the Future Directions For Health Care in Saskatchewan Report);
- Assign ongoing case managers for the mentally ill;
- Provide ongoing support and respite services for families of the mentally ill through a Mobile Crisis Intervention Unit.

B. Canadian National Institute for the Blind

The Canadian National Institute for the Blind is a non-profit, voluntary organization that assists persons who are blind or visually impaired to become active and independent members of society. As our population continues to age, the prevalence of visual-impairments will continue to expand. The organization supports efforts to improve lifestyles and prevent blindness. Programs include: rehabilitation; orientation and mobility; employment and vocational counselling; services for children; a national library service; vision rehabilitation and low-vision

services; prevention of blindness; deaf-blind services; courses in adjusting to blindness; technical aids provision; services to the elderly; and public education and advocacy.

The underlying philosophy of services for the blind and visually impaired is active participation by the individual in making decisions about the most effective way of meeting needs.

Expressed Needs

- A comprehensive, multi-disciplinary approach to meeting the needs of the blind and visually impaired;
- Improved service coordination;
- Consistent accessibility to services;
- Expanded rehabilitative and preventive education programs;
- Reduced social isolation.

Options Proposed to Address Needs:

- Improve communication and cooperation between service agencies;
- Support self-empowerment to assist individuals in making informed decisions by:
  - facilitating the establishment of peer support networks; and
  - enhancing educational opportunities;
- Facilitate accessibility to information about available services;
- Enhance transportation services;
- Expand education programs for the blind and visually-impaired to facilitate employment and improve quality of life;
- Increase funding to support children's services and staff development;
- Expand public education about preventing blindness and visual impairment;
- Provide funds to support a full-time education consultant for rural and northern areas of the province.

C. Canadian Paraplegic Association

The Association's purpose is to provide comprehensive, community-based services to persons with spinal cord injury and other mobility-impairments. The Association's services include, among others: rehabilitation counselling; vocational and employment counselling; peer support; accessibility consultation; cross-

cultural outreach services; and home modification information.

Expressed Needs

- Coordinated services for persons below age thirteen;
- Special education needs, particularly for persons with multiple disabilities;
- Special needs transportation, including inter-city transportation;
- Physical access;
- Attendant and respite care;
- Pre-employment training;
- Post-secondary work/study programs; and,
- Employment.

Options Proposed to Address Needs

- Greater emphasis on accident prevention;
- Ongoing assistance in the other areas of need.

D. Disabled Natives Organization

The Disabled Natives Organization is affiliated with the Indian and Metis Disabled Federation of Saskatoon and the National Aboriginal Network on Disability. Persons of Indian ancestry are overrepresented in the disabled population as a result of ill health, accidents, and birth defects caused by substance abuse. Geographic isolation, medical transportation and access to services are additional challenges in meeting the needs of persons with disabilities in the North.

Expressed Needs

- Access to information about services;
- Accessibility to buildings on reserves:
- Wheelchair ramps;
- Adapted housing;
- Education, including basic literacy and skill training;
- Employment;
- Service coordination and cooperation between the senior levels of government and Native organizations;
- Rehabilitation programs in the North.

Options Proposed to Address Needs

- Establish one common source of information about the broad spectrum of services available in Saskatchewan;
- Provide financial support for making adaptations to community buildings and homes;
- Expand opportunities to achieve literacy and develop vocational skills;
- Establish special programs to serve Northern Saskatchewan.

E. DisAbled Women's Network

The DisAbled Women's Network is a non-profit support group for women of various disabilities. This organization has undertaken several short-term projects in recent years, including: workshops on violence against disabled women, and self-image; publishing newsletters and pamphlets on womens' issues; reviewing accessibility to transition houses for women with disabilities; and preparing a yoga manual in English and Cree for wheelchair users.

Expressed Needs

- Accessing women's services;
- Poverty, unemployment and underemployment of all women;
- Transportation.

Options Proposed to Address Needs

- Create a special fund to improve physical accessibility to women's services, e.g., transition houses;
- Incorporate funding for physical accessibility within operating grants;
- Ensure and advertise accessibility to services;
- Ensure qualified and qualifiable women with disabilities benefit from affirmative action through the provincial Employment Fairness Program;
- Provide a focal point to enhance employment opportunities for women with disabilities through the Saskatchewan Public Service Commission;
- Advertise employment fairness for women, including women with disabilities, in all Government of Saskatchewan job advertisements;

- Support Employment Access (a nongovernmental organization situated in Regina) in assisting disabled job-seekers;
- Reinstate the 1975 cost-sharing formula (50%-50%) for special needs transportation.

F. Early Childhood Intervention Program

The goals of this Program include: encouraging parental involvement in the stimulation of their developmentally-delayed children; preventing and minimizing the effects of disabling conditions; and improving the abilities of disabled children to function in residential and school settings. Clients include infants and children of preschool age, and their families.

Expressed Needs

- Expanding services to meet the needs of infants and children;
- Increased access to paediatric physiotherapy;
- Interdisciplinary outreach teams to serve rural areas;
- Greater availability of psychological services;
- Improved access to speech and language therapy.

Options Proposed to Address Needs

- Reduce waiting lists for professional services:
- Increase agency personnel;
- Increase salaries and benefits for professionals;
- Enhance overall funding for the program.

G. Employment Access

Employment Access is a nonprofit group supported by the Outreach Program of Employment and Immigration Canada. Its goal is to facilitate employment of persons with disabilities.

Expressed Needs

- Employment equity;
- Expansion of Vocational Rehabilitation for Disabled Persons (VRDP) Act;
- Supported employment;
- Education; and
- Transportation.

Options Proposed to Address Needs

- Expand employment equity requirements to other Crown Corporations, such as the Saskatchewan Power Corporation, hospitals, universities, and provincial government contractors;
- Extend accessibility to the Vocational Rehabilitation for Disabled Persons Program to include those who are working, or who have a work history;
- Enhance supported employment programs by expanding job coaching and attendant care services at the job-site;
- Encourage an expansion of initiatives, such as student equity plans at SIAST, the University of Regina, and the University of Saskatchewan;
- Expand transportation services to assist persons with disabilities who work.

H. Handicapped Farmers' Program

The Handicapped Farmers' Program assists individuals to make informed decisions about farming with a disability. The organization provides practical information, while recognizing the importance of family in adaptation and rehabilitation. Its underlying philosophy is to encourage individuals and their families to function as a team.

The Program maintains a list of farmers with disabilities in Saskatchewan; organizes a volunteer visitation service for farm families experiencing a disabling accident or illness; operates an information database about machinery modifications and adaptations; publishes a newsletter; organizes and hosts workshops and seminars; develops farm safety accident prevention programs in cooperation with other agencies; provides an audiovisual library for its clients; and is involved in public education.

Expressed Needs

- Professional family counselling services in rural areas;
- Financial support to maintain self-employment, provide vocational assistance, and facilitate recreation;
- Safety and accident prevention programs;
- Public awareness about the program;
- Support for the national organization.

Options Proposed to Address Needs

- Provide financial support for the Handicapped Farmers' Program;
- Initiate training for newly disabled farmers wishing to either return to farming, or find alternate employment;
- Establish professional counselling services for disabled farmers and their families, using a team approach;
- Initiate a subsidy program that provides compensation to disabled farmers and their families for the extra costs of maintaining and adapting machinery, buildings, corrals, etc.;
- Enhance emphasis on services to assist farmers with disabilities;
- Provide greater resources for farm safety programs;
- Incorporate farm representation on the Workers' Compensation Act Review Committee;
- Support rural recreation groups who work to integrate disabled farmers and their families into the community.

I. Multiple Sclerosis Society, Saskatchewan Division

This organization supports both individuals and family caregivers, educates health professionals and the public about Multiple Sclerosis, participates in social action programs, and raises funds for further medical research.

Expressed Needs

- Physical accessibility;
- Transportation;
- Income stabilization;
- Adapted housing;
- Medical services;
- Access to supportive equipment;
- Information about accessing services;
- Employment.

Options Proposed to Address Needs

- Government should monitor accessibility to buildings;
- Saskatchewan Transportation Company should be subsidized to provide special needs service to small communities;
- Wheelchair lift-equipped buses should be used on regular municipal transit routes;

- Develop a directory of services for persons with disabilities;
- Expand the Saskatchewan Aids to Independent Living Program;
- Increase allowances under the Saskatchewan Assistance Plan;
- Eliminate the deduction of disability pension from social assistance allowances;
- Increase the availability of suitable housing;
- Expand home care and physiotherapy services;
- Improve diagnostic capability regarding MS;
- Enhance medical training in the area of disabling conditions.

J. National Access Awareness Week Steering Committee

National Access Awareness Week is a federally-sponsored, annual project aimed at fostering accessibility in transportation, housing, education, recreation and employment through increased public awareness. Discover Together, a resource manual, has been developed to assist school-aged children learn about disabilities. Corporations and municipalities assist the organization in meeting its objectives.

Expressed Needs

- Employment of persons with disabilities;
- Mobility within the physical environment;
- Education opportunities;
- Adequate housing;
- Transportation, especially to and from employment.

Options Proposed to Address Needs

- Continue to expand employer awareness;
- Enhance public education.

K. Saskatchewan Abilities Council

The purpose of this organization is to provide specialized services for persons with disabilities in the following areas: assessment and provision of technical aids and assistive devices; vocational assessments; vocational programs; work training; and assisting farmers with disabilities.

Expressed Needs

- Training/employment for persons with disabilities;
- A comprehensive disabled persons insurance plan;
- Improving access to modern technical aids;
- Vocational assessments;
- Income supplement that is not based on need.

Options Proposed to Address Needs

- Establish a comprehensive disability insurance program to assist individuals who are not eligible for Workers' Compensation, or who are not presently covered by a private insurance plan;
- Increase funding for:
  - technical aids;
  - special needs transportation;
  - vocational rehabilitation;
  - training on the job; and,
  - supported employment.

L. Saskatchewan Association for Community Living

Saskatchewan Association for Community Living advocates an improved quality of life for people who are developmentally-delayed and mentally-impaired. The Association lobbies for funding directed to the individual and his/her family, family education, improved respite services and increased public awareness.

Expressed Needs

- A disability pension which is not based on need;
- A guaranteed annual income;
- Skill training;
- Improved quality and quantity of housing;
- Services for native persons with disabilities;
- Programs to address abuse of persons with disabilities;
- Operational funding for special needs transit;
- Direct funding for individuals/families rather than service providers;
- Service coordination.

Options Proposed to Address Needs

- Develop an overall, coordinated plan for delivery of services through a coalition of advocacy groups and government departments.

M. Saskatchewan Association of Rehabilitation Centres

This non-profit, charitable association was established in 1967 to serve thirty community-based sheltered workshops and activity centres in Saskatchewan. More than two thousand mentally, physically and socially disadvantaged persons benefit from its services. The organization's goal is to strive for improved quality of life for adults with disabilities by focusing on training and work activities.

The organization operates recycling centres that provide meaningful employment for persons with disabilities, facilitate environmental protection, and foster community pride. The association also assists a variety of community-based voluntary boards, individuals, and others who require assistance with new product development, marketing, education, work-stations, research and technical assistance.

Expressed Needs

- Opportunities for supported employment;
- Special needs transit;
- Vocational assessment services;
- Expansion of its recycling capability;
- Applied research and development activities.

Options Proposed to Address Needs

- Expand employment opportunities for persons with disabilities who work most effectively in a supported environment;
- Restore the 50% provincial share of funding for special needs transportation;
- Provide a mobile vocational assessment unit;
- Diversify recycling opportunities to include old tires, used engine oil and plastics;
- Diversify the range of employment opportunities for persons with disabilities;
- Provide financial support for applied research activities and information sharing.

N. Saskatchewan Federation of the Council for Exceptional Children

The Council for Exceptional Children is the only Saskatchewan organization striving to improve the quality of education for all exceptional children - both gifted and challenged. Areas of emphasis include: in-service education for teachers; organizing and hosting an annual province-wide conference; and participating in public policy development.

Expressed Needs

- Opportunities for teacher training in special education;
- Adequate funding for education and support for exceptional children.

Options Proposed to Address Needs

- Ensure a reasonable level of central and regional personnel to support school divisions;
- Reinstate the bursary program for teacher training in specialized areas.

O. Saskatchewan Head Injury Association

The goal of the Saskatchewan Head Injury Association is to heighten awareness about the benefits of early intervention and treatment of head injuries by qualified medical personnel. The Association promotes family support services, public awareness and training in care provision for persons who are brain-injured.

Expressed Needs

- An individualized, team approach to services;
- A range of support services, including:
  - lifeskills training;
  - transitional housing in conjunction with therapy;
- Uniform accessibility to support services.

Options Proposed to Address Needs

- Government should fund a "lobbyist"/family educator;
- Introduce appropriate new rehabilitation services;
- Increase funding for prevention programs.

P. Saskatchewan Voice of the Handicapped

This organization's mandate is to lobby on behalf of all persons with disabilities in the province.

Expressed Needs

- Special needs transportation;
- Employment;
- Housing:
- Attendant Care;
- Income Security.

Options Proposed to Address Needs

- Increase funding for municipal special needs transportation;
- Ensure future vehicle purchases by the Saskatchewan Transportation Company include wheelchair lift-equipped buses to facilitate intra-provincial travel;
- Expand government employment of disabled persons;
- Coordinate employment initiatives for the disabled with the federal government;
- Enforce affirmative action;
- Involve consumers in the design of special needs housing;
- Fund an Independent Living Resource Centre to provide competent attendant care based on a brokerage model;
- Establish a guaranteed income for all persons with disabilities.

Q. Services for Hearing Impaired Persons

Deafness and hearing-impairments represent the most prevalent chronic disabilities in North America. Given our burgeoning elderly population, these conditions will become even more prevalent in future.

Services for Hearing Impaired Persons' mission is to enhance the quality of life of its client-group, by providing services that promote independence. Distinct values influence a range of services; namely, respecting the individuality of all deaf or hard of hearing persons; providing services without discrimination; facilitating informed decision-making through increased awareness about options; educating the public about hearing impairments and the prevention of disability; assuming a leadership role in supporting persons who are deaf or hard of

hearing; and ensuring the organization is responsive to clients' needs.

The organization provides counselling and job placement services for deaf and hard of hearing persons, as well as interpreters and professional notetakers.

Expressed Needs

- Poverty of client-group;
- Abuse;
- Housing;
- Accessibility of services for its clients.

Options Proposed to Address Needs

- Workshops to increase public awareness;
- Enhance special education;
- Improve access to TeleWriter Devices for the Deaf;
- Expand training and vocational opportunities for persons with auditory disabilities.

R. South Saskatchewan Independent Living Resource Centre

The existing lack of personal care assistance and special needs transit are barriers to maximizing the independence of persons with disabilities. Among other objectives, this organization strives to establish a brokerage-based, attendant-care program that provides services at the convenience of the client. The object of the program would be to facilitate consumer control and independent lifestyles.

Expressed Needs

- Attendant care;
- Convenient and appropriate transportation;
- Employment;
- Leisure and recreation.

Options Proposed to Address Needs

- Fund a new, self-managed attendant care program;
- Enhance the priority of transportation services for persons who are employed, who are actively seeking employment, or who require it for leisure purposes; and

- Expand employment opportunities for persons with disabilities.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION:

As noted under Expressed Needs, the agency/committee consultation process resulted in a diverse array of issues being brought to the fore. One recurrent theme is the need for a central "window into government", a branch designated to assist both individuals and agencies in determining which government department(s) can best serve their respective needs. This information clearing-house would be mandated to offer its services in a manner reflecting the varied demographic and ethnic backgrounds of the people of Saskatchewan.

After considerable and thoughtful deliberation, the Premier's Disabled Persons Advisory Committee believe the following actions ought to be taken.

Access to Program Information

Spirit and Intent

Access to program information is essential for individuals, families, and other concerned parties; therefore,

WE RECOMMEND:

1) that the province expand the role of the Disabilities Directorate to function as a central information and referral agency concerning the various nongovernment organizations, departments and branches of the provincial government whose services have an impact on citizens with disabilities;

2) that the provincial government develop a user-friendly, computerized data system, to provide details of health and social programs for persons with disabilities; and

   a) that the provincial government liaise with the federal and municipal governments and nongovernment organizations to facilitate this process;

b) that employer awareness material be included in this data system;

c) that this data system be accessible throughout Saskatchewan, for example, through Rural Service Centres, provincial, federal and municipal offices, and through select nongovernment organizations, libraries, school division offices and hospital boards;

d) that systems design be accomplished through a tendering process involving the private sector, and compilation and input of data be accomplished through a nongovernment organization;

e) that the Disabilities Directorate act as the clearing-house for this data system and be responsible for amending and updating it at least semi-annually.

Service Coordination

Spirit and Intent

All service providers must be sensitive to the special program needs of all client groups, and respect their clients' abilities to access required services with dignity and understanding. Furthermore, coordination of governmental and nongovernmental services is essential to ensure that persons with disabilities receive the umbrella of services they require, in the most cost-effective manner possible; therefore,

WE RECOMMEND:

3) that government and nongovernment agencies provide services which reflect the unique needs and cultural identity of their respective clientele;

4) that government, special interest groups and nongovernment organizations strive for greater inter-agency communication, coordination and cooperation in providing services for persons with disabilities;

5) that special interest groups and nongovernment organizations provide services for persons with disabilities in a manner that avoids duplication;

6) that the provincial government institute a service-oriented accountability mechanism, to ensure that nongovernment organizations provide services for persons with disabilities in the most effective manner possible;

   a) that this mechanism be developed through consultation between relevant government ministries and the various service providers, and be aimed at mutually agreeable indicators of success;

7) that the provincial government institute a service-oriented accountability mechanism to ensure that its departments provide services for persons with disabilities in the most effective manner possible;

8) that the Family Foundation coordinate the receipt of grant applications from nongovernment organizations that serve persons with disabilities and distribute them to the appropriate government departments.

Education and Public Awareness

Spirit and Intent

The importance of lifelong education, and public awareness in empowering persons with disabilities cannot be overstated. The Advisory Committee respects the thrust of Saskatchewan Education's Access and Abilities report concerning Adult Special Education. We also endorse the Saskatchewan Federation of the Council for Exceptional Children's statement regarding the provincial government's "commendable practise of not putting a funding 'cap' on the designation of children with severe handicaps or on funds for equipment, bus lifts, renovations, etc.". Access to educational opportunities for disabled persons should extend beyond the age of 21 years; therefore,

WE RECOMMEND:

9) that Saskatchewan Education infuse awareness information concerning disabling conditions throughout its Core Curriculum;

10) that all institutes, colleges and agencies educating health care professionals, paraprofessionals, social workers, educators, and others, increase emphasis on disabling conditions in their curricula;

11) that career counselling services and counselling for transition* be expanded for disabled students within kindergarten through grade 12, and the post-secondary education systems;

12) that Special Education Branch of Saskatchewan Education maintain the current level of central and regional personnel support to School Divisions;

13) that Saskatchewan's universities and regional colleges formalize "Student Equity" plans, to reflect the spirit of Saskatchewan Education's Access and Abilities report;

14) that National Access Awareness Week consider developing additional public awareness resource material aimed at fostering parent/child interaction, based on, or similar to, the Discover Together model, currently being piloted in Saskatchewan elementary schools;

15) that professional associations and labour organizations provide inservice training for those members who work with persons with disabilities;

16) that Saskatchewan Education reinstate its Bursary Program for the training of teachers in specialized areas, for example, hearing-impaired and visually-impaired programming.

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* **Transition** is the movement from the structure of one social institution or service delivery system to another, and occurs throughout an individual's lifetime.

Employment and Employer Awareness

Spirit and Intent

Employment is a major stepping-stone to individual economic self-sufficiency and psychoemotional health. Certain systemic barriers exist which hamper disabled persons from acquiring suitable employment or maintaining self-employment; therefore,

WE RECOMMEND:

17) that the provincial government discuss the feasibility of expanding the Vocational Rehabilitation for Disabled Persons (VRDP) job coaching role by working in conjunction with the federal government;

18) that the provincial government initiate an employer awareness program about the minimum costs associated with undertaking job accommodations for persons with disabilities;

19) that the business sector make job accommodations for persons with disabilities as one part of corporate citizenship;

20) that the provincial government require all departments, agencies, and Crown corporations to submit employment equity plans to the Saskatchewan Human Rights Commission by June 1993;

21) that the provincial government require municipal governments, school boards, and other third party agencies to develop employment equity plans by June 1994;

22) that new economic development projects, supported by government investment in the form of loans, shares, or other incentives, be required to submit an affirmative action plan to the Saskatchewan Human Rights Commission; and

a) that in the process of awarding tenders worth $100,000 or more annually, and with an employee population of 50 or more, the provincial government use those companies that have filed an affirmative action plan with the Saskatchewan Human Rights Commission;

23) that the provincial government assist the Entrepreneurial Cooperative for Disabled Persons to examine the feasibility of expanding its operation to support self-employed persons with disabilities;

24) that the provincial government encourage the federal government to raise the ceiling of the Federal Disability Tax Credit for persons with disabilities who are self-employed;

25) that the provincial government develop an employment subsidy program which, where necessary, will compensate employers of persons with disabilities for the difference between productivity and pay.

26) that the Disabilities Directorate continue to work with the provincial and municipal governments, and various agencies in the private sector, to facilitate employer awareness programs.

Special Needs Transportation

Spirit and Intent

Transportation has an impact on each individual's ability to access education, work, and health services, and to conduct other affairs fundamental to daily living; therefore,

WE RECOMMEND:

27) that, as a first step, Saskatchewan Transportation Company implement a two-year pilot project using wheelchair lift-equipped buses for standard transportation routes on an *ad hoc* basis; and

a) that in order to offer wheelchair users transportation within the province, these buses be deployed on a 24 hour advance notice, "first come, first served" basis; and

b) that in order to facilitate this pilot project, Saskatchewan Transportation Company purchase two wheelchair lift-equipped buses; one to be based in Saskatoon, the other in Regina;

28) that the provincial government continue to fund the Transit Assistance for the Disabled Program at a minimum level of 50% of the operating deficit, (i.e., costs in excess of user contributions).

Income and Vocational Services

Spirit and Intent

It is widely acknowledged that, given their unique needs, many persons with **severe and permanent disabilities** incur greater living expenses than do most "able-bodied" persons. Lack of training, unemployment and underemployment hamper the ability of many to achieve long-term self-sufficiency. In 1990, approximately 4700 persons relied solely on social assistance for their livelihood; therefore,

WE RECOMMEND:

29) that the provincial government investigate ways to provide an income supplement for those **severely and permanently disabled persons** who are chronic social assistance recipients, as designated by Saskatchewan Social Services;

30) that Saskatchewan Education and Saskatchewan Social Services expand the ongoing Vocational Rehabilitation for Disabled Persons Program (VRDP) to enhance education and employment opportunities for persons with disabilities;

31) that the provincial government investigate changes to the Saskatchewan Assistance Plan regarding the disincentives to employment posed by the threat of losing services, such as the Saskatchewan Prescription Drug Plan, Saskatchewan Aids to Independent Living (SAIL), and counselling.

Special Needs Housing

Spirit and Intent

Safe, secure, and suitable housing is a basic need; therefore,

WE RECOMMEND:

32) that from 1992 to 1997, the provincial government dedicate 10% of all new construction through its Innovative Housing Program to residences for persons with disabilities;

33) that the provincial government pass regulations to ensure safe and functional housing for persons with disabilities receiving social assistance, or residing in public housing;

34) that the government involve persons with disabilities in designing and managing special needs housing funded by the province.

Attendant Care

Spirit and Intent

Access to attendant care is essential to the "activities of daily living" and quality of life of many persons with severe physical disabilities; therefore,

WE RECOMMEND:

35) that the provincial government design and implement a two-year pilot project to evaluate self-managed attendant care.

Special Needs Recreation

Spirit and Intent

Recreational activity is an integral component of a healthy and rewarding lifestyle; therefore,

WE RECOMMEND:

36) that, consistent with the spirit of Partners Working Together: A Recreation Plan for Saskatchewan, the provincial government promote:

- recreation programs and services for persons with disabilities; and
- the integration of persons with disabilities into recreation programs.

Prevention of Disabilities

Spirit and Intent

The prevention of either the occurrence or exacerbation of disabling conditions is both humanistic and fiscally responsible. Saskatchewan's overall commitment to preventive health care has been highly commendable. This has been witnessed through the fine work of such groups as the Saskatchewan Institute for Prevention of Handicaps, the Saskatchewan Safety Council, and the Handicapped Farmers' Organization. Moreover, the Future Directions for Health Care in Saskatchewan Report (Murray Commission) advocates the "Protection and Promotion of Health", while Consensus Saskatchewan's Leading the Way: A Blueprint for Saskatchewan, addresses the "Growth and Well-being of People".

Substantial personal and social benefits accrue from proactive approaches to health promotion; therefore,

WE RECOMMEND:

37) that public health programs and provincial health curricula place greater emphasis on the promotion and maintenance of optimal health, the prevention of disabilities, and the monitoring of various factors influencing healthy lifestyles.

Family Living

Spirit and Intent

Families are of intrinsic importance to Saskatchewan's social fabric. Families provide both nurturance and caregiving to

approximately 21,700 persons with disabilities aged 15 years or older, residing in provincial households. As suggested by the Future Directions in Health Care in Saskatchewan Report, providing primary care for a family member with a disability can cause greater financial, emotional and spiritual demands than those experienced by other families. A family support program would enhance the quality of life of all affected, while alleviating the spiralling costs now threatening our health care system.

In this regard, the Committee endorses the thrust of both the Future Directions report, and the report of Consensus Saskatchewan; namely, that:

- A program of supports to the family caregiver be implemented to ensure the availability of counselling and educational support, and access to respite and adult day/night care services;

- The home care component of a community-based program be emphasized to provide services for all residents who require home supports to remain independent for as long as possible, including the elderly, the young disabled, the mentally handicapped, the mentally ill and those with head injuries;

- Services should include nursing, home support and rehabilitation; therefore,

WE RECOMMEND:

38) that the Saskatchewan Home Care Program be expanded to include a comprehensive support system for family caregivers of disabled persons, which provides access to respite, counselling, and educational services.

Abuse of Persons with Disabilities

Spirit and Intent

While facts concerning the abuse of persons with disabilities continue to emerge, it is well-documented that the nature and prevalence of this social problem is significant enough to warrant grave concern. As a group, children are afforded greater statutory protection than adults; therefore,

WE RECOMMEND:

39) that the provincial government give dependent adults the same protections which benefit children under PART III of The Child and Family Services Act (Saskatchewan);

40) that agencies who serve persons with disabilities increase professional awareness of the multi-faceted nature of abuse, and design mechanisms to treat the psychological effects of victimization.

Social Programs Auditor

Spirit and Intent

The suitability, effectiveness and accountability of publicly-funded social programs both in and outside of government, is a concern. In addition, criticisms regarding the inequity of service availability in northern and rural communities has been a recurrent theme among those groups which have met with the Advisory Committee. Representatives of advocacy organizations have been sensitive to the many difficulties in securing adequate personnel and other resources needed to provide services in outlying, sparsely populated areas. Nevertheless, the necessity for some mechanism by which to explore realistic methods of addressing northern and rural needs - and the accountability issue - is mandatory; therefore,

WE RECOMMEND:

41) that the provincial government establish the Office of the Program Auditor, reporting directly to the Legisvative Assembly to:

- evaluate publicly-funded social programs and service delivery agencies;
- identify gaps in service provision, including regional disparities and ethnocultural problems regarding access;
- monitor service delivery, including service duplication;

. determine value for money {fiscal responsibility};

. suggest change; and

a) that the primary criteria for evaluation of social programs include the following principles:

- comprehensiveness;
- accessibility;
- public administration;
- freedom of choice among available services;
- responsibility to consumer and service provider;
- program effectiveness.

Physical Access

Spirit and Intent

Accessibility to health and social services is a fundamental right. However, many mobility-impaired persons are prevented from securing appropriate assistance due to environmental barriers; therefore

WE RECOMMEND:

42) that the provincial government continue to ensure accessibility to all provincial government buildings;

43) that the provincial government require major third party agencies (e.g., hospitals, special care homes, community clinics, and educational institutions) ensure accessibility by June 1996;

44) that the provincial government require other third party agencies (e.g., transition houses and day care centres) to ensure accessibility by June 2001.

Communication Devices

Spirit and Intent

The ability to communicate needs no elaboration. However, for some, technology is necessary for communication; therefore,

WE RECOMMEND:

45) that the provincial government provide a tax credit for the purchase of augmentative reading and communication devices to support individuals with sensory disabilities.

46) that SaskTel implement a pilot project to assess the need for greater public access to coin-operated TeleWriter Services for persons who are deaf or hard-of-hearing.

Research and Development

Spirit and Intent

Ideally, in order to ensure efficiency and cost-effectiveness, the creation of innovative health and social programs must rest on a proactive research base. Reactive research is also necessary to guarantee that existing programs continue to develop to best meet the changing needs of their respective clientele. Ongoing evaluation is a central component of sound research and development; therefore,

WE RECOMMEND:

47) that the provincial government fund independent research of innovative programs to enhance the quality of life for persons with disabilities;

48) that the Saskatchewan Health Research Board, and other funding agencies for research in the area of social programs, target a portion of the annual grant for research to improve the quality of life for disabled persons;

49) that all third party agencies be encouraged to participate in action research and disseminate information about outcomes with other organizations that assist persons with disabilities.

FUTURE:

First and foremost, our vision is for persons with disabilities to participate in and contribute to all aspects of society. We realize that each of us is an essential thread in the social fabric. We know that, through individual initiative and with support, persons with disabilities can achieve their birthright.

We have presented recommendations to assist in meeting the expressed needs of persons with disabilities in Saskatchewan. Yet, in submitting this report to government, we recognize that many issues remain unexplored, that the concerns of various persons with disabilities remain unaddressed. Therefore, we will:

- continue to identify gaps in client groups, to ensure that the concerns of all disabled persons are fairly investigated;
- continue to consult with a representative sample of special interest service providers;
- continue to examine existing services, both in and outside of government;
- follow-up our recommendations to determine the degree to which government and nongovernment organizations have responded to the needs of persons with disabilities.

To assist us in these endeavours, we would appreciate your responses to this report, in regard to the following questions:

- Which additional groups or individuals should be consulted to ensure cross-disability representation?
- What areas of research should be commissioned by the Advisory Committee?
- How can we improve communication with individuals, special interest groups, government, the business community and the public?

The fundamental aim of this report is to provide a blueprint to further the quality of life for persons with disabilities. To that end, we will continue to consult with other Premier's advisory groups across Canada, as they too strive for a broader national consensus in coordinating relevant programs and services.

ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY:

The Advisory Committee has found the following resources useful in researching the background for this report.

ACCESS AND ABILITIES: Report of the Provincial Working Committee on Adult Special Education. Saskatchewan Education. (September, 1990.) 24 pp.

> This report details the Adult Special Education Committee's work to "develop and recommend policies and procedures to Saskatchewan Education aimed at increasing accessibility to appropriate programs and services for adults with special educational needs". A statistical profile of the target population is delineated, as well as the twenty-eight, broad-based recommendations arising from the investigation.

LEADING THE WAY: A BLUEPRINT FOR SASKATCHEWAN: Final Report of Consensus Saskatchewan. Government of Saskatchewan. (September, 1990). 103 pp.

> As noted in the Executive Summary of Consensus Saskatchewan's report: "Our mission and plan of action involved gathering the ideas of Saskatchewan people about the future of our province and considering background information around four major theme areas: growth and well-being of people; security and stability of communities; expansion and diversification of the economy; and responsible and efficient management of resources...[The report features]...

. a vision for the future of our province that reflects the values and aspirations of Saskatchewan people;

. details of the vision in the form of goal statements; and

. [142] recommendations for future action toward achieving goals".

FUTURE DIRECTIONS FOR HEALTH CARE IN SASKATCHEWAN. Government of Saskatchewan. (1990). 300 pp.

> This report by the Murray Commission discusses ongoing demographic change in Saskatchewan with its resulting impact on health care demands. A total of 262 recommendations are presented concerning:

- a consumer-controlled health care system;
- community and supportive living services;
- new thrusts for institutions;
- new approaches for the health professions;
- provincial programs in a new system; and
- better health for northern residents.

PARTNERS WORKING TOGETHER: A Recreation Plan for Saskatchewan. Saskatchewan Culture, Multiculturalism and Recreation & Saskatchewan Parks and Recreation Association, Inc. (1990). 21 pp.

> The central aim of this report is to further the mission set forth in the Sport and Recreation Strategy for Saskatchewan for the '90s; namely, "to ensure that the resources allocated to recreation are used effectively and the maximum number of Saskatchewan residents have an opportunity to participate in the activities of their choice and at the level of their ability". Briefly, the report is a master plan designed to guarantee "equal access for all of Saskatchewan's residents to quality leisure time opportunities".

REMOVING BARRIERS: Accessibility to Adult Basic Education for Disabled Adults. Saskatchewan Education. (1988). 44 pp.

> As the title of this report suggests, this document outlines methods to attack the systemic barriers confronting adults with disabilities seeking to enhance their schooling. In many ways it is a precursor to the aforementioned Access and Abilities report. In addition to addressing "the need for adult special education", it describes an action plan for meeting those needs.